

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 1 through 5 and claim 9.

Please amend claims as follows:

---

-- 6. (Amended) A polarization-maintaining optical fiber component produced by the steps of:

laying two or more polarization-maintaining optical fibers side by side;

and

heating lengthwise portions of said polarization-maintaining optical fibers, fusing these heated portions, and elongating said heated portions in a lengthwise direction to thereby form an optical coupling section;

wherein said polarization-maintaining optical fiber having stress applying sections arranged symmetrically to each other with respect to a core in a cladding surrounding said core, and a largest one of a plurality of circles concentrically provided with said core or said cladding, which do not reach said stress applying sections and do not include said stress applying sections within a diameter of 20 um or greater; and said polarization-maintaining optical fiber component is a polarization beam splitter or a polarization beam combiner.

---

(2) 10. (New) The polarization-maintaining optical fiber component according to claim 6, wherein said polarization-maintaining optical filter is a PANDA type polarization-maintaining optical filter.